taken to step up research activities to increase production of Betel Leaves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K. C. LENKA): Sir, The ICAR has set up an All India Coordinated Project on betel vine with ten centres located in the important betel vine growing areas. The project has developed technology for the control of major diseases and pests and has improved the agro-techniques for increasing production of betel leaves.

Implementation of Command Area Development Programme

2261. DR. C. SILVERA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Command Area Development Programme is not being implemented properly?

(b) if so, the reasons therefor? and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) to (c) Command Area Development Programme initiated with the objective of better utilisation of created irrigation potential and improvement in productivity consists of many activities such as construction of field channels, field drains, land levelling, realignment of field boundaries, enforcement of rotational water supply, introduction of suitable cropping patterns, modernisation and efficient operation of irrigation system, etc. While satisfactory implementation of many components such as, field channels and rotational water supply is being generally achieved, difficulties are being faced on some of the items. The main reason for the same are budgetary constraints of the State Governments, lack of coordination between the Command Area Development Authority and Department of Irrigation, higher costs of land levelling, slow progress of consolidation of holdings and flood problems particularly in the eastern parts of the country. The Central Government have been in continuous dialogue with the State Governments to remove these deficiencies. Evaluation studies in some States have been carried out to identify the bottlenecks project wise and remove such obstacles for the successful implementation of the programme.

Visit of Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka

2262. DR. C. SILVERA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka visited India recently;

(b) if so, the details of bilateral issues that figured in his talks with the Indian leaders; and

(c) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir. Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Mr. Harold Herat visited India from 29-31 July 1991.

(b) and (c) India and Sri Lanka signed the Agreement to establish the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission. The Joint Commission will initially incorporate two Sub-Commission; One dealing with Trade, Investment and Finance and the other dealing with Educational, Social and Cultural matters. It was agreed that the Sub-commission meetings could take place in mid-November so as to prepare the ground for a meeting of the Joint Commission before the end of the year.

The two sides exchanged views on the ethnic situation in Sri Lanka and reiterated the need to seek a political solution to the problem. The two sides agreed on the need to encourage an early and voluntary return of refugees presently in India and to take steps in this regard.